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SUBJECT: BELGIANS WILL URGE DELIVERY OF STRONG MESSAGE TO
IRAN AT GYMNICH MEETING

REF: A. SECSTATE 143323

[1](#)B. ANDREWS-FALLS EMAIL 8/31/06

[1](#)1. (U) Belgian Foreign Minister De Gucht will urge the delivery of a strong message to the Iranians at the conclusion of the September 1 Gymnich in Finland. Despite some nervousness on the part of several EU members, De Gucht reportedly expects little difficulty in reaching agreement to follow such a course, according to Michel Tillemans, the MFA staff officer who will accompany the Minister to the meeting. At this stage, Tillemans told polcouns, the Minister thought there was absolutely no reason to permit the Iranians to perceive any daylight between the EU and the U.S.

[1](#)2. (U) Tillemans also noted that the session in Finland was going to cover the need for renewed progress toward implementation of the Middle East roadmap. To this end, they planned to urge a sustained effort to create the conditions in which progress actually could occur. Put in practical terms, this meant finding a practical way to get more help to the Palestinian people and working energetically to rebuild Lebanon.

[1](#)3. (SBU) Speaking parenthetically, Tillemans indicated also that De Gucht and Prime Minister Verhofstadt had succeeded in overriding stiff cabinet opposition to sending a Belgian contingent to the new, beefed-up UNIFIL. Several members of the coalition government thought it was a bad idea to send Belgian troops into harm's way, particularly in the period right before critical local elections. With the Prime Minister's backing, getting the proposal to send troops through the cabinet turned out to be easy. Imbrie
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